

2006 Northern Rockies Fall Center Managers Meeting Minutes
October 24, 2006
Missoula, MT

Attendees

Kathy Elzig, Gary Boyd, Kim Thomas, Julie Polutnik, Larry Elder, Tony Lubke, Gaylen Yeates, Sally Estes, Julia Genre, Judy Heintz, Carol Bienhold, Susan Hillstrom, Dennis Crew, Rick Parker, Rosanna Finley, Neil Nelson, Steve Lefever, Nancy Gibson, Chris Accetturo, Andy Randall and Gloria Gunther (via conference phone)

Overview of 2006 Season

Northern Rockies 2006 fire season was interesting. The number of fires and acres that burned across the Geographic Area was average. The entire Geographic Area saw widespread fire activity while at the same time nationally, multiple Geographic Areas were busy fighting fire too.

Issues and Concerns

Initial Attack Dispatchers (IADPs) –

- Lack of qualified IADPs was identified as an issue, not only within the geographic area, but nationally as well.
 - A lot of Northern Rockies' IADP requests and requests for IADPs to assist other Geographic Areas did not get filled this season.
- No IADP (D-311) class is scheduled through the Northern Rockies Training Center (NRTC) this training season.
 - A suggestion was proposed to look at putting on IADP training every year for a few years to get the IADP pool built up within the Geographic Area.
- ✓ **Action Item #1:** Julia will bring up IADP training needs at the NRTC Training Committee meeting 10/25.
- ✓ **Action Item #2:** Identify IADP pool (recruitment, training, etc) for discussion at the Northern Rockies Spring Dispatchers Meeting.
- The ability to get local IADP Task Books signed off was part of the IADP discussion. For some IADP trainees, it is tough to get off the local unit to get Task Books signed off and some units will not sign-off a Task Book if the IADP does not go off unit.
 - Centers' representatives agreed to make an effort to do IADP exchanges amongst themselves to help get local IADP Task Books signed-off on units other than their own.
 - Another tool suggested for signing off IADP Task Books is to complete the IADP work performance evaluation for any IADP tasks being completed by the EDRC/EDSD when they are working locally. Attach the performance evaluation documents to the IADP Task Book once it has been issued. Using this method, individuals won't need as many evaluations documented in the Position Task Book to get signed off, yet, will still have the required documentation for performing the work.

- Bringing non-local IADPs or militia types in to cover radios was an issue.
 - Dispatchers were not familiar with which mountain to switch to in order to talk to incidents.
 - Radio coverage for night shift was especially noted.
 - A few centers provided their solutions to covering night shift radio traffic:
 - Dillon Dispatch Center hires local 911 dispatchers as ADs to cover night shifts. DDC is looking to get these resources qualified as IADPs the best they can.
 - Coeur d'Alene Dispatch Center has an IDL seasonal fully qualified as an EDRC that performs IADP roles and can cover radio traffic for night shift. The individuals' position description states it is part of the job, so does not need IADP on his Red Card.
 - Kootenai Dispatch Center has an MOU with three local 911 Centers. Most of the time, one of those 911 Centers has radio contact with the incident, so KDC will go home and the 911 Centers will cover night time radio traffic.
- Lack of Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) Initial Attack Dispatchers and Dispatch Survey was discussed.
 - Several managers stated there just are not enough DNRC Initial Attack Dispatchers to cover the workload and asked what the results were from the Montana State Dispatch Workload Survey completed this spring.
 - Concern was voiced that there was a bias as far as State vs Federal responsibilities when the Dispatch Centers are performing "Interagency" work.
 - Some managers felt the survey was biased to Montana State workload only.
 - Other Centers stated their DNRC dispatchers did a good job working for all agencies, truly "Interagency".
 - Billings Dispatch Center does not have a DNRC Initial Attack Dispatcher to cover the DNRC's workload.
- ✓ **Action Item #3:** Kathy will follow up with Ray and Cobey to get results of the MT State Dispatch Survey distributed to Centers.

Local Oversight –

- Lack of local oversight in expanded dispatch organizations was identified as an issue.
 - Some Centers did not have local dispatchers supervising their expanded dispatch organizations which caused problems due to lack of local dispatch procedures.
 - Local Centers are left cleaning up resource orders and reconciling financial documents long after the visiting dispatchers have gone away.
 - This issue needs to be remedied next year.

Dispatch Recorders (EDRCs) -

- Centers are ordering Support Dispatchers (EDSDs), when Dispatch Recorders (EDRCs) could probably fit the need.
 - There were not many EDRC requests this season.
 - EDSDs should be managing 3 - 4 EDRCs.
 - Maybe need to look at ordering more EDRCs in the future to meet the staffing needs.

- Where were all the EDRCs? Who's taking the classes every year?
 - The bulk of last years D-110 Dispatch Recorder class were Apprentices. The Apprentices will not go out on EDRC assignments unless it's when they are not busy, which is usually when Dispatch is not busy.
- FDC, GVC, HDC/DDC, MDC and NDC are planning to host D-110 Dispatch Recorder classes this training season.

Incident Business/Finance –

Roberta Whitlock attended this portion of the meeting.

Needs and standard process for hiring Fallers in Northern Rockies -

- Ordering Fallers needs to be standardized.
 - Depending on who is filling the request, it could be an "O" number for Agency resources or "E" number if not Agency.
- Roberta said they are looking at putting together Emergency Equipment Rental Agreements (EERAs) for hiring Fallers.
 - The EERAs would provide a complete Faller package that will include 2 fallers and appropriate equipment (i.e. saws and pickup).
 - A few contractors have said they would like to do this.
 - Office of Workers Compensation Program (OWCP) and qualifications would be taken care of and certified by the contractor.
 - Liability falls back on the contractor if the resource is not qualified which is a good thing for the government.
- There has been a proposal submitted to the Best Value Contracting Officer to add Faller Module to the 2007 Best Value Solicitation.
 - This proposal will need backing from the Operations and Business Committees to get it added to the 2007 Best Value Solicitation.
- There has also been discussion for having a national faller contract by 2008.
 - The contract will not necessarily be administered at Boise, but national standards will be established.

AD hiring, training, driving, payment -

- It does not appear Agency Administrators are aware of the workload that has been dumped on Dispatch Centers the past few years concerning ADs.
 - Dispatch personnel are getting away from their regular dispatch duties taking on all of the administrative duties hiring, training, and payment for AD resources.
 - The bulk of this extra workload is coming from the Forest Service, not the other agencies.
 - This issue needs to be brought to the Agency Administrators attention.
 - The Northern Rockies Coordinating Group (NRCG) Board of Directors acknowledges this issue but nothing is being done about it.

- A few ideas were proposed to remove some of the extra workload from the local dispatch centers:
 - Establish a Mob Center for AD/EERA resources. The Mob Center would deal with hiring, training, payment duties as well as mobilization of the resources.
 - Establish Training Officers on each Forest to be in charge of IQCS.
 - Have Tim Murphy identify MOU holders that can provide defensive driving and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) training.

Needs and standard process using local Law Enforcement resources -

- A standard process for hiring and ordering local law enforcement resources needs to be established.
 - Every order was handled differently.
 - Some wanted to be hired as “C” numbers for their posse or “O” numbers for individuals.
- When is the support by local emergency services cooperators compensable?
 - Roberta noted there is an agreement in place specific to the Lolo National Forest Service and Missoula County for acquiring local law enforcement resources.
 - The agreement states if EMS personnel are doing work outside of their regular scope, then the work in support of the incident is compensable.
- Mike McMeekin, Montana Sheriffs and Peace Officers representative to NRCG, was identified as a good contact for more information using local law enforcement resources. Mike’s number: 406-523-4810.

Acquisition support for cooperators -

- The perception is that Dispatch will provide acquisition support, which is not the case.
- Offices across the Geographic Area have different procedures for Acquisition Management (AQM).
 - Different procedures for AQM can cause confusion with Buying Teams.
 - Buying Teams are calling contractors/vendors directly rather than going through regular dispatch channels.
 - Some centers fill requests with their local EERAs then go to the Buying Team for items they cannot fill with local EERAs.
 - Some centers have a Contracting Officer type person that all of the EERA stuff goes through.
- Need to look at the National 5 Party agreement to address cross billing across the agencies.
- What is the best route to get incident acquisition support?
 - Roberta replied by getting a voice through to the Forest Service Director of Fire and the NRCG Directors.
 - Make sure you have discussed with your agencies how you are going to support incidents when you have fires.
 - Make sure we have the processes in place by next fire season.

- Zone Contracting Officers should work with Dispatch to identify how to support incidents amongst the agencies within their zones.
- Forest Service FAA needs to talk to the AQM support folks. AQM should have plans for cross billing or identifying who should be supporting the incidents. If plans are not in place, then they need to be developed.
- Can we hire ADs for Buying Teams or as Contracting Officers?
 - Roberta replied, until the Forest Service Washington Office AQM decides there are not enough COTR type resources out there, we will not see these types of AD resources on Buying Teams.
- ✓ **Action Item #4:** Kathy will forward out the “Procurement for Incidents” briefing paper. The paper identifies lead procurement personnel for each agency. Note: no representative has been identified for FWS.

ACE’s role in support to Dispatch Centers -

- Roberta discussed the “Incident Business Residual Work” document. The document identified Incident Business Residual Work to be considered by the Administrative Center of Excellence (ACE), per discussion between Roberta and Lynn Johnson.
 - Travel Authorizations and Travel Vouchers – end result, was easier for Dispatch to deal with Travel Authorizations and Travel Vouchers.
 - Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPA) Payment Packages – need to get new direction from AQM Zone to set up BPAs with local Forests (every Forest is different).
 - Equipment Payment Packages – ACE was helpful to MDC. KDC and FDC received packages back to local unit from other agencies.
 - Payment Packages prepared by IMTs – ACE did assist a few times.
 - ISUITE – Some ACE personnel have had ISUITE training. ACE could have ability to assist in the future.
 - Accruals – ACE did not have to do any accruals for Type 3 or less incidents.
 - ISUITE/Accruals – ACE did not need to do this one.
 - CBA Accounts – FDC was told ACE does not assist with CBA accounts as the local unit has materials to do this.
- Other than MDC, ACE did not provide much help or assistance to Dispatch.
- Need more support from ACE in support of fire.
- ✓ **Action Item #5:** Roberta will provide ACE a list of needs from the Dispatch community. The list will also be shared with Larry Dawson and George Weldon.

FY '07 Fire codes and Job codes -

- FDC set up MISC ABC codes for agency support incidents.
 - Told by Albuquerque Service Center (ASC) that it was illegal to do this, should charge to WFSU.
 - Roberta said it is not illegal.
- FDC also submitted MT State False Alarm in FireCode.

- Didn't find out the FireCode didn't meet ASC requirements until folks tried to submit time.
- It appears ASC is screening FireCodes for approval but not notifying anyone if the Code does not meet requirements.
- ✓ **Action Item #6:** Roberta asked that folks forward their ASC issues or FAQs to her and she will forward them on to WO and ASC.
- ✓ **Action Item #7:** Kathy set up a FireCode for dispatch assistance to the States of Idaho and Montana. Will send out as soon as possible.

Staffing and Needs

- Missoula Dispatch Center had an independent review team look at their organization earlier this summer. Nancy recommends all Centers do this.
 - The review pulled their Board of Directors together and made them look at how they need to operate.
 - The review identified staffing, impacts and duties.
 - The review showed how agencies impact each other and who is actually paying for the workload.
 - Having a Dispatch Center review is a clear way of bringing issues to the Agency Administrators attention.
 - The review was a good step identifying/quantifying workload and funding at all levels...locally, Geographic Area, and National response.
 - Contact Nancy if you would like a copy of the Review.
- Fire Management Officers have no idea that Dispatch is filling orders for local incidents, neighboring incidents, IMT requests elsewhere.
- ✓ **Action Item #8:** Dispatch Duties Review.
 - a. Kathy will send out "ACE "Impacts on Dispatch Duties Task List" for Centers to update.
 - b. Each Center needs to identify what percentages agencies are impacting each other. Quantify/identify the volume of business/duties information by Fall NRCG Meeting in December.
 - c. Once the Task List has been updated by Dispatch Zone, then it needs to be shared with NRCG, local Administrators and the Board of Directors at all levels.

Dispatching of EERA resources from other than their host dispatch office

- Discussion occurred at SAC meeting...other than BV equipment contracts, EERAs will need to be done at the local level, unless they can get Debbie Wesselius to add saw equipment and a few other items.
- State of Montana DNRC will still administer Porta-Pottie contracts.
- BLM will still administer Potable Water contracts.
- Lowboys will be part of the BV contract for water handling equipment. Any other lowboy needs will need to be via an EERA setup at the local level.

ROSS Update

Ray Nelson joined the meeting via conference call from the ROSS Change Board Meeting in Denver.

- Newest ROSS release will be in March 2007.
- System Performance #1 issue.
 - Especially noticed as California came on board this year.
 - To remedy this they are doing some work on the internal Forest Service networks, trying to fix some software bugs.
- Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) System #2 issue.
 - CAD system will be phased in over the next few years.
- Working on data input/output issues with IQCS, ISUITE, CACHE SYSTEM, FIRECODE, EATIS, etc.
- Moving away from Data Delivery System (DDS) and moving towards a Data Warehouse System called COGNOS.
- Tactical Aircraft (AC) a big issue too.
 - Looking at the inability for GACCs to see Airtankers and the issue of inadvertently releasing Airtankers to home unit.
 - Next Tactical AC release won't be out until 2008.
 - Some minor fixes will still go forth.
- Will Lead Planes/ASMs be added to tactical?
 - Ray could not say whether this function would be in next release or not.
- Another big issue....big emphasis on data cleanup.
 - Significant effort to accomplish standardized naming conventions.
 - Contracts not tied to resource items appropriately, organizations, etc.

Data Delivery System (DDS) Update

- DDS not going away just yet.
- Ongoing discussion of creating a national reports DDS database template to be supported by the Forest Service FAMWeb Help Desk.
- All centers have the copies of their RRQ ROSS Reports databases.
 - Not everyone using their databases yet.
 - Some changes need to be made to the queries to capture Exclusive Use Aircraft History.
 - 2006 RRQ Reports databases will be distributed to each Center next spring (April – May).

Dispatch representatives to NRCG Committees

Kathy confirmed who is on what Committee:

Committee	Dispatch Representative	Fall Meeting Date
Native American Crews (NAC)	Ray Nelson	October 10-11
Prevention	Gail Thurston	November 8-9
Operations	Mark Heppler	December 13-14
Training	Larry Elder	October 25-26
Business	Shannon Bonney -Lily from NDC on Business Committee so is a 2 nd rep	November 6-10
Equipment	Chris Acceturo current rep would like to be replaced, - Ann Speer will replace Chris	
Aviation	Tony Lubke	

- ✓ **Action Item #9:** Kathy will update list and forward on to Tracey Nimlos and Center Managers.

Use of Mob Center in NR -

- Sally proposed a contracted Mob Center for additional resources (i.e. ADs, Best Value resources, EERAs, etc) year round.
 - The Center would take care of administrative duties like training, payment, hiring, etc.
 - Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) has something like it set up with regular ODF employees paid by AD and Contractor fees.
 - Jeff Scussel started to look at R6 process a while back.

TEAMS

- Bitterroot Dispatch Center will dispatch Western Montana teams this next season. Tony Lubke will be the Western Montana Type 2 Team coordinator.
- Eastern Montana teams will be dispatched through Billings Dispatch Center, although Lewistown Dispatch and Miles City Dispatch Centers are being looked at to host the teams in the future.
- Coeur d'Alene Dispatch Center will dispatch North Idaho teams.
- Team Nominations will be due January 16, 2007.
- Gary Boyd will be putting IMT plan together for 2007 season.
- ✓ **Action Item # 10:** Zone coordinators would like to get together with Gary and Cobey some time in November to discuss some enhancements to the IMT database. The database needs to identify who needs to re-apply, who doesn't need to re-apply, etc.

Best Value (BV)

- “A Review of the Northern Rockies Best Value and Other Fire Contracts” was submitted to the Northern Rockies Board of Directors in September.
- A lot of comments have been submitted about the review.
 - Local fire departments took offense to being termed as “cooperators” in the report. Think they should be termed as “local government”.
- CDC would like to be able to order busses via closest forces next year rather than sticking to the BV contract. It doesn’t make sense to get a bus for the Idaho Panhandle from Great Falls when they can get a bus closer, out of Spokane from the Colville NF.
- ✓ **Action Item #11:** Take forward to SAC Committee. Centers would like some leeway for ordering buses closest forces rather than sticking to the BV list.
- Some changes being discussed for the 2007 BV Solicitation include:
 - Having 2 solicitations – one solicitation for engines/tenders and a separate solicitation for skidgines/other equipment
 - Reassignments of BV water handling equipment – some people liked that equipment was reassigned but the question came up...why reassign BV5 who has been out 27 days when BV2 has been sitting at home “available” for 10+ days? The 2007 BV Solicitation should have some better verbage addressing reassignments.
 - Number of people on an engine - 2 or 3? NRCG Operations Committee providing input.
 - Bus solicitation will be different this next year - Buses won’t be in Eatis.
- ✓ **Action Item #12:** Center managers need to take a look at Issue F, page 16, of the Best Value Review and Draft 2007 Solicitation language. Get back to Kathy by mid November with any comments or suggested changes.

Spring 2007 Dispatchers Meeting

To be hosted by LEC in Lewistown, MT March 13-16, 2007.